

Executive Proclamation

State of South Dakota

Office of the Governor

Whereas, In 1932, Josef Meier brought the Passion Play to the United States in search of a permanent home for the play in America; and,

Whereas, A group of Black Hills businessmen invited Mr. Meier to visit the area, and with a leap of faith, the Luenen Passion Play became the Black Hills Passion Play of America; and,

Whereas, On June 15, 1939, the first performance of the Black Hills Passion Play was presented in the newly constructed Amphitheatre in Spearfish, South Dakota; and,

Whereas, Sixty-five years later, after 10,000 performances and 10,000,000 viewers, the Passion Play stands as one of the major tourist attractions in the Black Hills; and,

Whereas, The Passion Play is performed on the longest outdoor stage in the country, over 680 feet, every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday evening during the months of June, July, and August, and is currently produced and directed by Josef Meier's daughter, Johanna Meier, and her husband, Guido Della Vecchia; and,

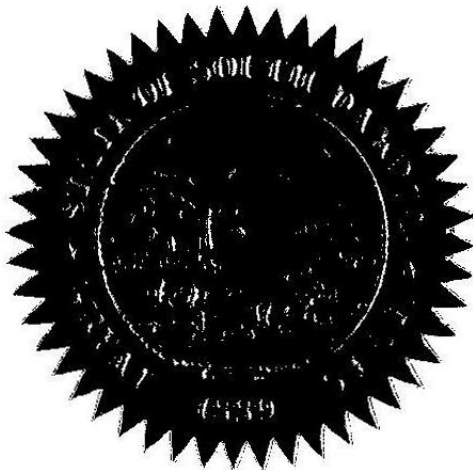
Whereas, Prior to Mr. Meier's death in 1999 at the age of 94, he was presented the South Dakota Governor's Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts; and,

Whereas, Numerous special events are underway in celebration of the 65th Anniversary, one of which is a gathering of many former professional actors from all over the country, as well as local extras and supernumeraries who are into their fourth generation of participation as the tradition is handed down through families in the community, and fourth generation audiences are also returning:

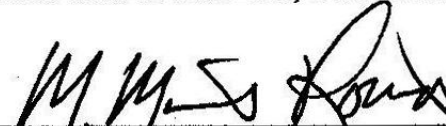
Now, Therefore, I, M. Michael Rounds, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim June 15, 2004, as

BLACK HILLS PASSION PLAY DAY


in South Dakota.



In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Ninth Day of June in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Four.


M. Michael Rounds, Governor

Attest:


Chris Nelson, Secretary of State